Surára
Pakidái

/107 cont./

769
296 snuff-tubes. After these preparations, the chiefs, all the men, youths, and boys, light and black-colored participants, assembled outside the maloka. At a hissing sound from Hewemão they then stormed into the courtyard, screaming loudly, ran once around the periphery, and then grouped themselves around the clay plate. The snuff-tubes were filled with powder, and the men by twos blew it with all their might into each other's noses (Ill. 44). On the occasion of this festival they take even more snuff than before other magic performances, curing the sick, and prayers. The effect was extraordinary. After only a few moments all the men were in a wild state of ecstasy (Ills. 45 and 46). At first they danced and leaped, gesticulating and screaming, in wild disorder around the clay plate, and after that they stormed around the courtyard several times in the
[535] same manner. Then groups of five, ten, or more men put their arms around each other's necks and performed stamping circle-dances in this formation (Ill. 47), during which each man tried to pull another one tightly to him; now and then they also
769
• 526 danced with the knees bent. After half an hour, this ecstatic dancing, during which the participants were bathed in sweat, was replaced by an extremely strange type of sport -- petapõanhamũ. In the entire outer circle of the maloka courtyard there were seated everywhere two men opposite each other, chest to chest, with legs spread apart; in each case one had his on top of the thighs of the other one. The partners were always a Surára and a Pakidái; moreover, in each case one of them was blackened. They wound their arms around each other at the neck and, with vigorous arm movements, pulled each other back and forth with all their might (Ill. 48). Each tried to pull the head of his opponent quite close to him. Sometimes their arms would drop down on the back of the other one, and they would then pull at each other for a while in this position. During the struggle they constantly called out wrathful words at each other. Often the wives stood beside their husbands and spurred them on. But there were no victors and no losers in these combats. If the strength of a combatant flagged, another tribesman immediately came and continued the struggle with the opponent

Surára, Pakidái, Waiká

/107 cont./

769 in his place. The wife then massaged the head of the exhausted
526 one, so that he would quickly be ready to resume. The chiefs
[622] and war chiefs in particular distinguished themselves in this
[624] type of sport. They also fought the longest, some of them with
[147] five, six, and more opponents; they had positively unbelievable strength and endurance.

These combats, in which one man always symbolically represented the good spirit, that is, a hekurá, and the other, who had smeared himself with soot, the evil spirit, a nonexí (see pp. 213 ff., 225 ff.), lasted almost two hours. After
[262] that the men were completely exhausted and refreshed themselves with a new, joint meal of tapir meat and maniac flat-
[276] cakes. Afterwards, however, many of the participants suffered from severe headaches brought on by the snuff-powder in connection with the inhuman physical exertion, so that many wives were obliged to massage their husbands' heads.

769 In the evening there was another half-hour procession in the maloka courtyard, when all the little jamaru vessels in which remains of bone ashes were stored were carried along. This retention of a certain amount of ashes is very important, so that the next festival in memory of the dead can be held, even though no member of the tribe /108/ dies up to that time. It could not take place without any bone ashes of deceased Surára or Pakidái.

769 If one compares this annual festival with that of the Waiká,
114 which was described by Zerries in great detail (515), one finds
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515. Zerries, 1955b, pp. 662-665.

extensive analogies in the most important phases. Zerries believes that among the Waiká it was originally a harvest festival to which other rites of various kinds were added (516).

516. Zerries, 1955b, p. 662.

For the Surára and Pakidái, on the other hand, it can definitely be said that here there are no features reminiscent of a harvest festival.

2: Becher--235 . E-5 (1955-1956) 1960 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Surára, Pakidái Waica

/108 cont./

769 182 184 789 526 [266]

festival. It is decidedly a festival in memory of the dead, which characterized by the ceremonial drinking of the bone ashes of deceased members of the tribe. At the same time, defensive magic against the nonexí is connected with it, for they, of course, are the ones who transmit sickness and thereby frequently cause death. As in all the magic cures for healing the sick, where the symbolic struggles between the "hekurá" and one or more "nonexí" are always enacted (see pp. 212 ff.), this factor is naturally also in evidence in all parts of the festival, in the dances, in the mixing of bone ashes, when the medicine man pulls down-feathers of the gavião-real out of the hair of the warriors and adds these, and in the duels performed in a sitting position. The latter are also documented for the Waiká in the same way, but Zerries writes that neither for him nor for the American missionaries was it possible to find out anything definite about the meaning of this ceremony (517). Presumably,

517. Zerries, 1955b, p. 665.

however, it is the same symbolic struggle between a good and an evil spirit as among the Surára and Pakidái. As yet nothing has been reported about this from other Indian tribes. My informants, however, told me that the Xiriána, Puseheweterí, and Aramamesterí engage in these combats on the occasion of their festivals in memory of the dead. Hence it seems to be a very special characteristic of the Yanonámi, which in former times may have been even more widespread. Herr Dr. Gerdt Kutscher, in connection with a lecture I gave in Berlin, called my attention to the fact that the position taken by the two men during this is reminiscent of the painting on a clay bowl from the Rio Ulúa, Honduras (518). According to Zerries, Barker,

114 769 526

518. This is in the Berlin Museum für Völkerkunde (No. IVa Ca 22381) and was reproduced in an article by Walter Lehmann (Lehmann, 1910, p. 737, Ill. 9).

Surára
Pakidái
Waica

114 /108 cont./ According to Zerries, Barker,
769 and Dupouy, there is also a similar combat among the Waiká,
522 in which the partners alternately beat each other on the chest
184 with clenched fists (519a, b, c). I did not observe this among

519a. Zerries, 1955b, p. 665.

519b. Barker, 1953, p. 447.

519c. Dupouy, 1953, p. 495.

114 the Surára and Pakidái. Similarly unknown there is the custom,
769 also reported by Zerries, that the men, when they run about in
276 the snuff-powder intoxication, hit each other on the back with the palm of the hand (520). The author named regards this as a

520. Zerries 1955b, p. 665.

769 fertility rite. There seems to be involved here, however, out-
177 side influences of agricultural tribes, which is indicated also by the ceremonial gathering of pupunha fruits (521).

521. Zerries, 1955b, p. 665.

769 It is further noteworthy that among the Waiká women and
184 girls actively participate in the festival in that they take part in
562 some dances and even drink some of the banana soup mixed with
[266] bone ashes (522). In contrast to this, the female members of

522. Zerries, 1955b, pp. 662 ff.

the tribe act only as spectators among the Surára and Pakidái.

769 The endocannibalism should be regarded as a very signifi-
184 cant similar trait. It is documented for the Waiká by Cruxent (523a)
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523a. Cruxent, 1953a, pp. 149/50.

[illegible] articles (519) (520) (521). Moreover, /108/

[illegible] Zerries, [illegible]

/112 cont./

789 [821] [302] it is not needed, for example, before hunting expeditions or during a tribal migration. In this case all the men, women, and children paint their bodies with a confusion of serpentine lines, in order by this means to command the rain to stop. If
•526 789 this does not help, a tug of war -- toõtotő -- with a thick liana is arranged. This liana personifies the sucuriju (Eunectes murinus) --
[776] uaikonyá -- which, as a strong water-animal, has the power to induce Porê to stop shaking the rain tree (see p. 199). At first only two groups of red-painted men engage in the tug of war. But if the rain simply will not abate, red-painted women also take part in it. Their participation is supposed to increase the
[776] pressure on the sucuriju, for it is assumed that it is of the female sex and thus particularly well-disposed toward women. Such a
[857] tug of war often goes on for several hours. In most cases, besides adults, I also saw children who imitated it with a thin liana.

526 789 821 If it happens to rain while the sun is shining, the Surára and Pakidái believe that a serious fight has broken out between the moon, from which the rain comes, and the sun. Then all the members of the tribe feel obligated to come to the aid of their Supreme Being, the moon. They do this by again forming two mixed groups of men and women -- one symbolically represents the population of the moon and the other that of the sun -- who throw wet earth at each other; this "battle" is called xejejő.

782 5. A Special Way of Showing Gratitude to Porê and Perimbő

In connection with the festival in memory of the dead (see pp. 224 ff.) after the training period of the two medicine-man helpers (see pp. 143 f.), after the curing of the sick (see pp. 211 ff.), and other magic ceremonies, the people want to thank Porê and Perimbő (see p. 197) in a special way, outside of the customary prayers which take place through the hekurá (see pp. 199/201). For this purpose a large calabash is filled with earth,
[824] into which, in a circle, are stuck red-painted twigs of the imbauba tree (Cecropia palmata Wild.), which are connected

/113 cont./

7. Types of Sports

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[578] Aside from the stick duels -- xelekuhahẽ --, which are carried out for reasons of jealousy (549), all other types of sports

549. I have already described these stick duels in detail (Becher, 1959, pp. 162-167).

have a religious or magical character.

[237] Noteworthy above all is the game of ball with a monkey bladder -- yarobussí. Only male members of the tribe may take part in it, and for this purpose they always put on their cotton belts. Then they form a circle and keep hitting the bladder upward with the palm of the hand; it then represents both the sun and the moon (Ill. 50).

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821 This game of ball is very similar to that of the Uitoto /Witoto/, even with respect to the lunar and solar conceptions associated with it (550a). Moreover, it should be mentioned

550a. Preuss, 1921, pp. 123, 133-136; 1923, pp. 644 to 659.

that in a myth of the Paressi both celestial bodies are thought of as feather balls (550b). Finally, reference is to be made to the

550b. Karl von den Steinen, 1894, pp. 435/36.

Aztec popular belief in which the flying ball is likewise identified with sun and moon (551).

551. Krickeberg, 1948, p. 139.

526 Three other types of sports of the Surára and Pakidái have already been described elsewhere: petapoanhamú, the fight

/113 cont./

526 between two men embracing each other, which is performed in a sitting position (see p. 233); the tug of war (see p. 244); and the throwing of wet earth at one another (see p. 244).

539 [115]

## IX. Myths and Legends

The following myths and legends were told me by the Surára chief Hewemãõ:

### The Creation of the Yanonãmi

The earth already existed and was full of plants and animals, but as yet was without human beings. But one day the first man, Uruhí, came out of the leg of the xiapó, a small bird with black and yellow feathers similar to the japim. A short time later the bird-leg gave birth to a second man, then a third, a fourth, and finally a woman, Petã. These four men and the woman lived together in perfect harmony. Petã, to be sure, was the wife of Uruhí, the first-born, but the other three brothers also had the right to have sexual intercourse with her (552).

[835] 552. Among the Surára and Pakidái, the younger, unmarried brothers likewise have the right to have sexual intercourse with the wives of their elder brothers. Moreover, the members of both tribes believe that a woman is able to have strong children only if she has frequent intercourse with other men during her pregnancy. [843]

After a year Petã gave birth to a strong, healthy boy who grew rapidly and called all four men "father" (553). The boy's

[601] 553. The Surára and Pakidái children also call the unmarried brother of their father, not uncle, but likewise father.

2: Becher--280 E-5 (1955-1956) 1960 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Surára
Pakidái

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Ill. 46. Height of ecstasy

Ill. 47. Circle dance in the state of ecstasy

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Ill. 48. Petapoanhamũ -- the embracing-combat performed in a sitting position

2: Becher--281 E-5 (1955-1956) 1960 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
/18/
Surára
Pakidái
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Ill. 49. Curing the sick in pouring rain. (Five Surára medicine-man helpers dance around a youth sick with chicken pox)

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Ill. 50. Ball game with a monkey bladder

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## The Fiesta of the Harvest of "Pijiguao"

527 The fiesta of the harvest of the fruit of the "pijiguao" palm
574 (Bactris gasipaës) is perhaps the most important event of the year.
During this harvest everybody has food to spare and consequently
(484) can receive all those who want to visit them. As a result of this
there is a great deal of traveling during this period.

(628) Frequently two or three settlements gather in order to celebrate the fiesta. Then one part will go to celebrate the same fiesta in other friendly settlements.

The hosts, and sometimes the visitors as well, go out on a hunting trip, which lasts for several days, until they collect a sufficient quantity of meat. This meat is smoked and preserved for the fiesta.

527 When the hunters come back, the fiesta begins at night with considerable joy and singing. The hunters gather and march around the interior patio of the settlement several times. Then
• (526) there begins a mock battle with cudgels. Those who have axes or machetes use these in place of cudgels. They are waved about in the air in a way similar to an attack in fencing or fighting with cudgels. The weapons clash together, but blows are not struck at the body.

After this comes the fire procession. Every man takes a burning torch from the fire and joins the others who go around and around the periphery of the great circular patio formed by the huts. From time to time, when passing in front of one of the surrounding ranchos, they rap with the torch on one of the straight supports which hold up the roof, scattering sparks in the air.

(526) Afterwards, they do what is known as "golpeo al pecho" /hitting the chest/. The boys and a few men pair off against those of another settlement and carry out a duel of blows on the chest. One will present his chest while the other hits it with the side of the fist.

(533) All of these acts are carried out amidst much jubilation and singing. Sometimes this is repeated on the following night.

/448/

527 276 After this comes the daytime ceremony. A great deal of "yopo" is prepared and placed near the center of the group of huts. Some six or eight boys of the "host" settlement march around the patio and then toward the place where the "yopo" is. Another group of boys follows them rapidly. As each group arrives at the center, the boys receive a puff of "yopo" in the nose. After each and every one of the boys has taken the "yopo" through the nasal passage, the men follow them in the same way, in groups of six or eight. And when all of the "hosts" are in the center, the ones representing the "guest" or visiting settlement, follow them in the same "yopo" ceremony.

527 526 276 When each and every one has received his portion of "yopo," the group of men begins to march around in the center of the circular patio of the settlement. After a few minutes have passed, the men begin to separate off in pairs. The most violent of them begin having duels of blows on the chest. Others, seated by pairs on the ground, talk among themselves in the manner of the crooned messages.

The duels of blows on the chest receive the greatest attention. All those who are not paired off are watching. Also many of the women come to watch them. The group of onlookers approaches so close that only a part of them can manage to see what is actually happening.

527 276 Some of the men who have taken too much "yopo" lie impotently on their backs and are dragged out of the sun into the shade of the houses by the women.

And others who have taken a certain excess of "yopo" keep walking around, and their wives have great difficulty in keeping them inside the settlement. If they manage to get into the woods with no one watching over them, they may find themselves in grave danger.

[574] [484] After a while, everything begins to quiet down. Meat and as much "pijiguao" as it is possible to carry are given to the guests for their return trip. Thus they may take as long as a week on the trip to their settlement without running out of provisions.

*621 White's generalization that

> every society tends to behave in such a way as to achieve that balance between size and solidarity that will give it the maximum effectiveness in carrying on its life-sustaining activities. (1959:104)

*621 *683 562 583 582 721 Belligerent ideology and aggressive behavior

Village size plays an important role in the nature of the political relationships between groups that are not linked by kinship ties. As mentioned above, larger villages tend to use their strength and dominance to upset the exchange balance of women. But the degree to which a powerful group is able to force a dependent ally to cede women is limited by the ability of the smaller group to raid the larger village successfully. In ideological terms the Yanomamö express this capacity to wage war by placing emphasis on and valuing aggressive behavior. It is considered both proper and desirable to act ferociously, as this informs neighbors of the group's capacity to wage war and warns them that the group is willing to resort to war in political dealings.

*621 *628 526 574 152 Members of small villages are consequently constrained to behave militantly toward larger neighbors to limit the coercion that the larger group may be tempted to try. Their fierce behavior takes the form of threat, bluff, chicanery in trading and, most important, challenges to duels. Frequently, when villagers are invited to feast with an allied group, the invitation includes a challenge to a chest-pounding

duel. Such a duel functions to remind the allies that the host is strong and willing to display his strength to protect his sovereignty.

The practical effect of this kind of behavior is that the solidarity of political alliances is constantly threatened. Allies are always suspicious of each other's intentions, and political ties between them are tenuous.

Although the giving of women in marriage between allies serves to promote solidarity, the capacity for marriage to achieve this end in itself is limited by the constant displays of hostility and aggressiveness by both groups.

The display of ferocity is manifest at the local, village level also. No insult is too slight to go unnoticed and unchallenged. Indeed, most individuals seize upon these opportunities to display strength. Thus, a legitimate way for men to display aggressiveness is for them to beat their errant wives, to burn them with fire brands, to cut their arms and legs with machetes or to shoot them in a non-vital part of the body with a barbed arrow. Men constantly intimidate their wives and respond cruelly to the slightest provocations, such as the wife's failure to act quickly on a husband's demand for food. Men who are brutal to their wives are feared and respected by other men, for the implication of this behavior is that the man will behave equally fiercely if insulted by another man.

Men often prefer to have a wife from another village, upon whom it is easier--and safer--to vent ferocity and

10: Chagnon SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

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[For information on club fights as a means of settling disputes between individuals or factions within a village, see category 578.]

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18



supplies soak the new leaves in water and add ashes from the hearth to the wad. Men, women, and children chew tobacco and all are addicted to it. Once there was a shortage of tobacco in Kaobawä's village and I was plagued for a week by early morning visitors who requested permission to collect my cigarette butts in order to make a wad of chewing tobacco. Normally, if anyone is short of tobacco, he can request a share of someone else's already chewed wad, or simply borrow the entire wad when its owner puts it down somewhere. Tobacco is so important to them that their word for "poverty" translates as "being without tobacco." I frequently justified my reluctance to give away possessions on the basis of my poverty. Many of them responded by spitting their tobacco into their hand and handing it to me.

Work begins as soon as breakfast is completed; the Yanomamö like to take advantage of the morning coolness. Within an hour after it is light the men are in their gardens clearing brush, felling large trees, transplanting plantain cuttings, burning off dead timber, or planting new crops of cotton, maize, sweet potatoes, yuca, taro, or the like, depending on the season. They work until 10:30 A.M., retiring because it is too humid and hot by that time to continue with their strenuous work. Most of them bathe in the stream before returning to their hammocks for a rest and a meal.

The women usually accompany their husbands to the garden and occupy themselves by collecting firewood or helping with planting and weeding. In this way the men are sure that their families are safe and that the women are not having affairs with other men.

The children spend a great deal of time exploring the wonders of the plant and animal life around them and are accomplished biologists at an early age. Most twelve-year-old boys can, for example, name twenty species of bees and give the anatomical or behavioral reasons for their distinctions—and they know which ones produce the best honey. An eight-year-old girl brought me a tiny egg-like structure on one occasion and asked me to watch it with her. Presently it cracked open and numerous baby cockroaches poured out, while she described the intimate details of the reproductive process to me.

The younger children stay close to their mothers, but the older ones have considerable freedom to wander about the garden at play. Young boys hunt for lizards with miniature bows and featherless arrows. If they can capture one alive, they bring it back to the village and tie a string around it. The string is anchored to a stick in the village clearing and the little boys chase it gleefully, shooting scores of tiny arrows at it (see Fig. 3–8). Since lizards are very quick, and little boys are poor shots, the target practice can last for hours. Usually, however, the fun terminates when an older boy decides to make an end to the unhappy lizard and kills it with his adult-size arrows, showing off his archery skills to the disgruntled small fry.

Little girls learn very quickly that it is a man's world, for they soon must assume much of the responsibility for tending their younger siblings, hauling water and firewood, and in general helping their busy mothers.

Most of the people rest in their hammocks during the heat of midday, although they will collect fruits and other wild foods from the surrounding area, if any are in season. They avoid being in the direct rays of the midday sun.

If the men return to their gardening, they do so about 4:00 P.M., working until sundown. Otherwise, they gather in small groups around the village and take hallucinogenic drugs in the late afternoon shadows, chanting to the mountain demons as the

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[For information on club fights as a means of settling disputes between individuals or factions within a village, see category 578.]